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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the role of "Show-and-Tell" or "Newstime" in children's early school experiences. The study drew upon: (1) three case studies of newstime in kindergarten classroom in two Sydney, Australia, classrooms; (2) a state-wide questionnaire that surveyed 392 kindergarten through Grade 2 (K-2) teachers in New South Wales concerning their newstime practices; and (3) an ethnographic study in a kindergarten classroom in which newstime was explored from the perspectives of the teacher, the children, and a small group of parents. The study found that Show-and-Tell or Newstime is a regular part of a large majority of K-2 classrooms in New South Wales and that teachers have explicit purposes for including this activity in the curriculum. Teacher emphasis is on skill development rather than on the provision of opportunities to share oral narratives. The findings suggest that disparities exist between the pedagogical purposes cited in the research literature, teacher intentions, and the reality of newstime as it is organized in the classroom. (Contains 56 references.) (MDM)

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ED 383 447

The framing of educational knowledge through "Show-and-Tell" in Elementary Classrooms

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Abstract

Despite the fact that "Show-and-Tell" or "newstime" is programmed daily in many Australian elementary or K-2 classrooms, it often appears to be an undertheorised 'ad hoc' component of the school day. The current study seeks to demonstrate that this curriculum activity may provide important insights into the explicit and implicit issues children are learning about the nature of school knowledge from the very beginning of their school careers.

The study was articulated in three interrelated and developmental phases:

(i) three case studies of Show-and-Tell or newstime in kindergarten classrooms in two Sydney schools;

(ii) a state wide questionnaire of three hundred and ninety two K-2 teachers' newstime practices and their purposes if programming newstime regularly; and

(iii) an ethnographic study in a kindergarten classroom in which the children and a small group of parent perspectives were explored alongside the teacher's.

Findings indicate that newstime is a regular part of a large majority of K-2 classrooms in NSW and that teachers have explicit purposes for its inclusion in the curriculum. Teacher emphasis is on skill development rather than on the provision of opportunities to share oral narratives. Findings suggest that disparities exist between the pedagogical purposes cited in the research literature, teacher intentions and the actuality as it is organised in the classroom. Technical routines may be inhibiting interactive, child-centred discussion. This study demonstrates the importance of exploring such taken-for-granted components of the elementary curriculum.

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Introduction

> *It follows that to understand how curriculum patterns emerge we should perhaps look less at social systems and structures than at* ***particular*** *situations or episodes in which curriculum power is taken, given, challenged or negotiated,* (Shaw in Reynolds & Skilbeck, 1975, p.34-5, *my emphasis*).

One of the first ***particular*** curriculum "situations or episodes" a young child starting school is introduced to is Show-and-Tell, news or sharing time. [1] Its importance is demonstrated by its inclusion in many fictional stories written for young children (see for example, Ramona the pest; Freya's fantastic surprise and Schulz's Classroom Peanuts comic strip). Some have even claimed it "was the very best part of school" because "it was education that came out of my life experience," (Fulghum, 1989,p.ix). Despite its prominence in school folklore, it is often thought to be an 'ad hoc' experience in Australian classrooms and it remains largely undertheorised and ignored or glossed over. This contrasts markedly with the considerable body of research about student-teacher interaction during this curriculum practice which has been undertaken in North American classrooms in the last fifteen years (see for example, Cazden, 1988, Gallas, 1992 and Michaels, 1985, 1986). Where it has been theorised in Australian educational writing (e.g.Christie, 1985,1989, Kamler, 1994), it has been conceptualised as a "curriculum genre" with the focus mainly upon linguistic microanalysis. This study uses a range of data gathering strategies and analyses to take a broader, critical perspective (Apple, 1990) and to subject the taken-for-granted in curriculum practice to careful scrutiny (Delamont, 1992).

Background to the study: the pedagogy of newstime

Educational writers and researchers (e.g. Cazden, 1988, Christie, 1986, 1990, Michaels, 1986) suggest a range of purposes for newstime. These have been discussed in detail elsewhere (Cusworth, 1991, 1994). Briefly it is asserted that news

[1] Called many names ranging from Show-and-Tell, 'bring and brag', sharing or news, the term newstime will be used throughout this paper to signify this curriculum activity.

or sharing time is an important component of the early childhood curriculum because it can:

* provide an opportunity for children to share a personal experience or favourite belonging from home in front of a large group;
* build a bridge between home and school experiences, between home and school knowledge;
* encourage the development of oral narrative which plays a crucial role in our thinking and language development (Bruner, 1986, Hardy in Rosen, 1984); and
* develop children's oracy as a precursor to literacy development (Christie, 1986, Fox, 1983, 1988, 1994, Collins and Michaels, 1986, Michaels, 1985a and b).

To date research on newstime in Australian classrooms (Baker and Perrott, 1990, Christie,1987, 1990) suggests that teachers tend to dominate the talk within fairly rigid frameworks. The current study explores the tensions between educational writing, teacher ideals and intentions and the actuality constructed in classrooms during newstime.

Aims of the study

The study aimed to develop a rich and layered description of this fragment of classroom life in K-2[2] classrooms in NSW primary schools from the perspective of students and parents as well as teachers. It was hoped that this description would provide insights into the explicit and implicit lessons children are learning about the nature of school knowledge and how it is framed. Further, the study challenges the notion of newstime as a generic teaching and learning activity and suggests that the type of learning experiences being constructed through newstime will depend specifically on the type of context being constructed by the participants involved.

From a methodological point of view, the study therefore seeks to draw from both qualitative and quantitative paradigms in developing a multi-method framework for this research and permits an integration of analysis that has traditionally been polarised as either macro or micro. In this sense, then, this study encourages discussion about the need to cross traditional methodological boundaries rather than allow different

[2] K-2 represents the first three years of schooling in New South Wales.

approaches to remain confined to continue as "competing paradigms," (Hammersley, 1993b,p.xiii).

Methodology .

The study is a case study of newstime as a curriculum phenomenon. The researcher has used both qualitative (transcript analysis, semi-structured and conversational interviews, participant observation, analysis of student drawings) and quantitative methods (questionnaire) to gather data to provide a description and analysis of existing newstime practice from a number of perspectives. Three initial case studies of newstime in kindergarten classrooms led to a wider survey to investigate more general patterns which in turn led to an ethnographic study of the newstime culture in one kindergarten classroom. The research process itself was therefore developmental and the three phases are summarised below:

i) three case studies of news/sharing time in kindergarten classrooms in Sydney;

ii) a state-wide survey of K-2 teachers' newstime practices and their purposes if programming newstime as a regular curriculum activity; and

iii) an ethnographic study in a kindergarten classroom in which newstime practice is carefully examined from the perspective of the teacher, the students and a small self-selecting group of mothers.

Each phase of the research has been reported elsewhere (see Cusworth, 1991, 1994, 1995). This paper seeks to summarise the findings of the three phases to demonstrate the importance of developing a "thick description" (Spradley and McCurdy, 1979) of such a routine practice. The use of newstime by teachers across all three phases of the research demonstrates that newstime is a regular part of many K-2 classrooms in NSW. The different layers of newstime explored depict different aspects of the phenomenon and reveal different perspectives about the knowledge that is being constructed through newstime. Each phase of the project is briefly described below.

i) Three case studies of news/sharing time in kindergarten classrooms in Sydney

Kindergarten teachers in three Sydney classrooms were asked to audiotape ten sessions of newstime which they considered typical of the activity in their classrooms.

Tape descriptions were made of each tape and three sessions chosen randomly were fully transcribed. The teachers of Classrooms One and Two were also interviewed about their purposes in programming newstime daily.

The three initial case studies of newstime in Sydney kindergarten classrooms revealed no transcript examples of oral narrative. In Classroom Two and Classroom Three there were some examples of oral recounts. Classroom One and Three discourse patterns during newstime were clear examples of traditional I-R-E interaction (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975) which has for so long dominated talk in classrooms.

There were very few instances of student-student interaction during newstime discussion and very little opportunity for children to control the classification or framing(Bernstein, 1971, 1986, 1990) of the talk. In Classroom One the teacher's comments frequently restricted children's talk as demonstrated by the following excerpts in which the teacher's questions are highlighted:

Excerpt 1.1(Transcript 1c)

014 R: My parents got me a new bag.
015 T: **And what do you notice about the colour, boys and girls?**
016 R: Your favourite colour.
017 T: **And what colour is that?**
018 **Black, is it**?
019 Chorus: No.
020 T: **Is it blue?**
021 Chorus: No.
023 Several children: Pink, pink.
024 T: **What colour is it?**
025 Chorus: Pink.

and later

090 T: A slinky. **Am I saying it correctly?**
091 Slinky. Could I just...
092 **Do you know what shape that is**?
093 **Who knows what you call that line** ?
094 **When it goes round like that**?
095 An___Ah, Anton?
096 A: A spiral.
097 T: A spiral, yes.
098 Ch: A spring.
099 T: Oh, **who said a spring**?
100 Ch: Me.

The teacher of Classroom Three often used the children's newstime offers for her

own didactic purposes; for example, to instill the need to cross the road safely. There are instances of her explicitly questioning the authenticity of a child's response, even contradicting an answer as demonstrated in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 1.2 Transcript 3b:

038 N: Look what mummy buyed me.
039 T: No she didn't.
040 N: Yes.
041 T: No she didn't.
042N: Yes.
043T: *No she didn't.

The kinds of questions asked by Classroom One and Three teachers in the case study transcripts were shown to be questions which were mostly confirmatory requiring a 'yes' or 'no' response or a specific answer (Hasan, 1990, Williams, 1991). Very few examples of apprise questions (Hasan, 1990, Williams, 1990) which expect students to respond by offering their own thoughts or more tentative comments were noted. For oral narrative to be developed, it would be expected that students would need opportunities to talk at some length about their experiences but most of the children's news offers were brief, often only comprised of a sentence or two.

The teacher of Classroom Two, Ms Gray, did acknowledge in her interview the importance of children's storytelling and also introduced shared experiences as a basis for discussion with her students. Transcripts of newstime in her classroom were quite different in terms of teacher-student interaction than those of Classroom One and Three. This is demonstrated by Excerpt 1.3 below:

Excerpt 1.3 Transcript 2(a)

009 T: OK, good. Cathy?
010 C: And we had groups and one goes sketching and one goes writing and the lady showed us a tree which had been...you got to smell it and smells like [...] and you feed those [ ].
012 T: **Did you?** We didn't see that, the group that was with me.
013 **Could you explain a bit?**
01 4 C: The lady showed us.
015 T: **What do the bees do?**

016 C: The bees...the bees go round at the root and then the plants eat them.
017 A: Cause they're down in the plant arent' they, Cathy?

While only a few brief excerpts can be provided here, the findings from the case study phase suggested that it is not productive to see newstime as a generic activity or 'curriculum genre'. Despite superficial similarities in each classroom (circle formation for newstime, each child having an opportunity to share news, newstime as the first activity of the day) it appears that different learning contexts are being being constructed through different structuring and organisation of the newstime activity. The tape descriptions and transcripts from Classrooms One and Three suggested newstimes which were strongly bounded with the teachers controlling the selection, organisation, pacing and timing of the sessions. There were few opportunities for other children to initiate questions of the newsgiver or add a pertinent comment. Instead the teachers frequently chose the interrogative mood and their evaluative comments left little option for another comment or a differing opinion. The emphasis remained on the showing of and telling about an object. Classroom Two's teacher offered a different approach to newstime with little ritual encouraged and the expectation that the turn-taking set up during newstime would be replicated when the children were talking during other curriculum activities. Children were not permitted to show toys or other objects during newstime unless they had made them.

The interview questions used with the teachers of Classroom One and Two formed the basis for the development of an open-ended survey which was then sent to 200 NSW state primary schools, 40 Catholic schools and 20 independent schools.

ii) A state-wide survey of K-2 teachers' newstime practices and their purposes if programming newstime as a regular curriculum activity

A sample of K-2 teachers in NSW across all education systems were surveyed about whether they programmed newstime on a daily basis and, if so, what their purposes were. Of the 393 responses, 92% programmed newstime on a daily basis. Time spent on newstime ranged from fifteen to seventy-five minutes with most teachers spending between fifteen and twenty- five minutes on the activity. These teachers recorded various explicit purposes for including newstime regularly in the early childhood curriculum. In fact seventeen different reasons emerged from the data. The researcher used a different code, for example, for *oral language skill development* and *listening*

skill development, for *oral language skill development* and *oral storytelling.* The categories generated from the reasons given by the teachers for programming newstime are listed below as they emerged as the data was analysed. Relevant exemplars for each category from several respondents are included to illustrate each identified category. Many teachers nominated a number of purposes and these have all been included in the analysis.

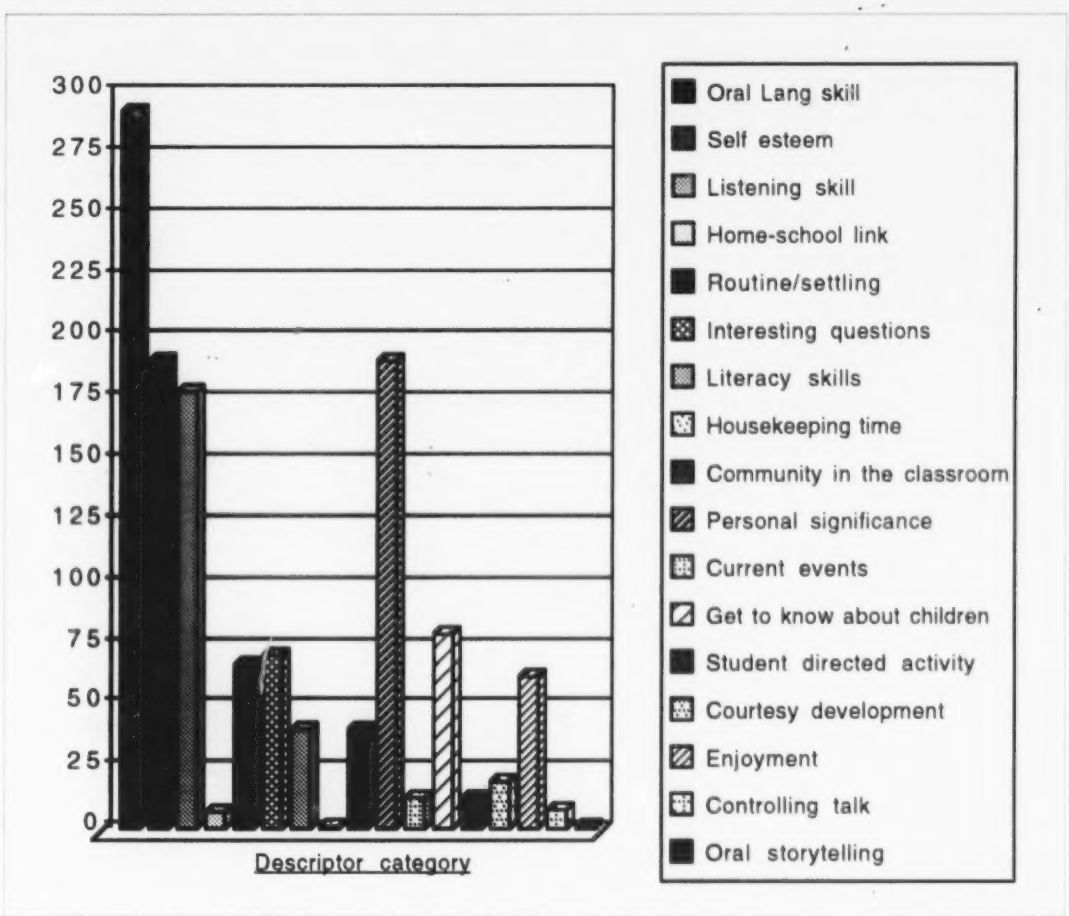
1. Oral language skill development *Encourages oral expression; extends vocabulary skills; opportunity to speak in a public forum; allows the teacher to monitor speech and language structure; to help develop speech and enunciation in individual children; an introduction to public speaking*
2. Self esteem development *They gain confidence; it is very important that children are given an opportunity for saying "this is me', "I am worthwhile..."; to promote the concept that every child has something to offer*
3. Listening skill development *They learn to listen attentively to others; development of active listening skills;practise listening manners*
4. Providing a link between home and school *Many spend much time before they arrive at school deciding what they want to tell; children like to talk about themselves and their families; to bond home and school*
5. Routine/settling activity *a good way of drawing children together as a group; routine development in learning days of the week and names of children listed for each day; a settling time;it sllows spontaneous talk to have a place, thus permitting work time to be quieter*
6. Encourage children to ask interesting questions *develops questionning; encourages children to ask relevant questions*
7. Facilitates the development of literacy skills *Aids their process writing; forms the basis of the reading, writing and spelling activity which follows; storywriting often results from news*
8. Enables housekeeping time *Can collect money and notes;if necessary to collect money, children can conduct this session with minimum supervision, frequently I'm quickly correcting comprehension sheets*
9. Develops a sense of community in the classroom *children learn to value and understand others; develop a caring attitude to their peers; gives children a sense of belonging and togetherness; to help form class into a cohesive unit in a warm and supportive environment.*
10. Enables students to share something of personal significance *Children really want/need to share/show aspects of their personal life and so do I!!*
11. Increases student awareness of current events *To glean understanding of world events.halfway through year 2, news must become real news from the newspaper, T.V etc*
12. Allows the teacher to get to know the children *Teacher gains understanding*

of children's interest and knowledge; gives me a chance to question their home life to see if they are happy; it gives me a chance to hear of any socially significant changes in the child's life eg dad's in jail or mum's haning a baby

13. Provides a student-directed activity *Allows for children to run or control a segment of the day; the need for newstime comes from the children themselves*
14. Encourages the development of courtesy *Children learn to take turns;raise hands to ask questions;how to speak to other children*
15. Enjoyment *Children are enthusiastic about sharing exciting/newsworthy events with their peers; children enjoy it and are upset when it ever is missed;*
16. Controls amount of student talk time *Children want to talk and this is a controlled time for them; hopefully means that they don't need to tell their friends what they have been doing during class time*
17. Encourages oral storytelling *oral storytelling (ordering thoughts)*

Teachers who responded to the questionnaire most frequently concentrated on developing more technical ways of knowing (Smith and Lovat, 1991) with oral language skill development rather than oral narrative or storying cited most often as a reason for programming newstime everyday. Graph 1 below sets out the purposes cited by teachers for programming newstime daily (n=363) as they have been coded. Implicit in this emphasis on oral language skill development is the assumption that children need help to become competent communicators. There is, however, much research which suggests that children beginning school are already very capable conversationalists "with a reasonably sophisticated understanding of discourse skills," (Evans, 1984,p.130). This finding may support Collins and Michaels' (1986) claim, that teachers expect only a "narrow literate standard" (p.221) and that this in turn may lead to ' a decline in the quality and quantity of interaction." There is still much to understand about the way teachers evaluate and shape the oral language offers of their students "on the spot" and the consequent literacy development of these students. As educators it is important not to underestimate what children can already do.

Graph 1: Teacher purposes for programming newstime



The researcher felt it was important to delineate between oral language skill development and the provision of an opportunity to tell a story. She felt oral skill development exemplified a technical way of knowing which would have quite different purposes and outcomes to those envisaged by storying which is perhaps a more interpretive way of knowing. It would seem that newstime is seen by the majority of teachers who responded to the survey as a time when students can engage in individual performances as a way of demonstrating or even presenting their oracy skills. This is suggested by the terms used by teachers to describe oral skill development in their questionnaire responses: *oral expression*; *vocabulary skills*; *opportunity to speak in a public forum*; *allows the teacher to monitor speech and language structure*; *help develop speech and enunciation in individual children*; *an introduction to public speaking*. Newstime appears to be perceived as a forerunner to

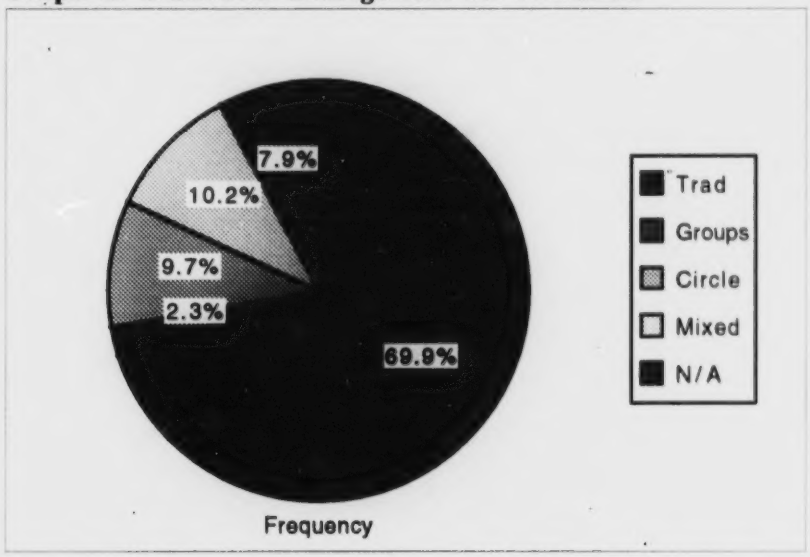
public speaking rather than a venue for storytelling. The opportunity to tell a story as a valuable or worthwhile activity in itself does not appear to be well recognised as a purpose for newstime.

Data from the open-ended survey also sought to investigate how teachers organised their class for newstime by asking teachers to draw the classroom arrangement for news as well as describe a typical newstime activity. The drawings suggested that a number of traditional classroom structures were most commonly used, even for an activity designed to encourage the students to talk. In addition, the questionnaire provided data about other ways teachers used to structure the newstime experience, and, in fact, demonstrated that the circle formation was not frequently used nor were all children given the opportunity to share news each day. More than half the teachers drew diagrams depicting very traditional arrangements with themselves sitting either at the front of the massed class with the newsgiver or behind the whole class group. Table 1 and Graph 2 illustrate the classroom arrangement for newstime.

Table 1: Classroom arrangement for Newstime

Set up	Frequency	Percentage
Trad	274	69.9
Groups	9	2.3
Circle	38	9.7
Mixed	40	10.2
N/A	31	7.9
Total	**392**	**100**

Graph 2: Classroom arrangement for Newstime



This maintenance of fairly traditional arrangements would inhibit interactive questioning and discussion of news topics by students. Other teachers also indicated that they remained removed from the news session, sitting at their desks. The teacher was most likely to be seated at the front of the class with younger age groups (53.6 Kindergarten, 55.5 Year 1 compared with 39.3 % for Year 2) perhaps reinforcing a perception that younger children needed more adult input. Year 2 teachers made most use of the whole circle formation. Some teachers used a variety of formations for newstime incorporating a time for a whole class plenary as well as other talk opportunities. Very few teachers set up physical structures which would be conducive to the kind of interactive discussion they nominated as one of the reasons for programming newstime on a daily basis in their classrooms.

Many teachers intimated a tendency to control the newstime activity, searching for what they considered correct answers to 'sensible' questions, restricting rather than elaborating children's talk opportunities during newstime through timing each newsgiver or limiting the number of questions that other children could ask about a particular news offer. Others wrote explicitly about using newstime to control children's talk: By providing a venue to enable children to talk, other learning tasks during the day would be less prone to chatter. Given the importance of talk in learning and the crucial links between talking and thinking development, it is of concern that teachers still express the need to control children's talk-time during learning activities

which are intended to provide a venue for children to talk.

The final phase of the study explored newstime in one kindergarten classroom from a number of the participants' perspectives.

iii) An ethnographic study in a kindergarten classroom

For the ethnographic phase of the study the researcher chose a kindergarten class, KY, in which two less traditional organisations of the newstime were used: small conversation groups of four to five followed by a whole class circle. This was a deliberate choice. Having identified both traditional and less traditional ways of structuring the same classroom event, it was thought that an in-depth study of less conventional formations in a specific context might be helpful. Data was collected using a range of methods including participant observation, conversational interviews with Lorelei, the class teacher, students and a small group of mothers, analysis of student drawings of newstime and research journal notes. Because of space constraints only the student drawings, teacher and parent interviews will be discussed.

Student drawings

The children were asked to draw "newstime" as part of a regular writing activity. The teacher scribed their comments underneath. All but one of the twenty five children present during the activity illustrated and dictated their enjoyment of newstime. The great majority of the faces drawn were obviously happy as they were drawn with definitive smiles. A range of bright colours were also used. Some examples can be found overleaf as Drawings 1, 2 and 3 included as Appendix One. Their positive response to the task can be contrasted with the child whose drawing is included as Drawing 4 who did not enjoy the activity. Eighteen children had drawn themselves either giving their news or within a particular news 'story" they remembered sharing.

Drawing 1 is representative of the children who dictated their enjoyment of this activity and represented the whole group during newstime. Drawing 2 is an example of a child who has represented the content of a news story itself while Drawing 3 represents the child who has perceived herself and the teacher as the key players in

newstime. As might be expected of children of five and six, the majority of the newstime drawings focus on the child who is the drawer and the class teacher. When the statements are taken with the drawings all children have represented newstime as the whole-class circle with an individual child sharing news. No one has depicted the conversation groups. The exception is Drawing 4 and the child who said simply to Lorelei: "I hate newstime." His drawing uses dark colours and while the other children have drawn faces in outline, drawing four is a pattern rather than a depiction of an activity - more an emotional response rather than a drawing. His comment and accompanying expression was so intense that Lorelei did not probe his response further. In retrospect it would have been extremely helpful had she been able to ascertain why the activity generated so much dislike. While it is important to consider each of the drawings and the accompanying statements individually, it was also interesting that the children's comments were able to be categorised into four groups: for the children, newstime is about (i) showing; (ii) telling; and (iii) listening and learning.

Some of the drawings do not fall neatly into just one of these categories - there are a number which can be categorised in more than one. The drawings with their comments therefore suggested that eighteen of the children had constructed newstime as a presentation: an active showing and/or telling of either a meaningful personal item or a recent memorable happening or experience. Both the teacher and the other children are important as audiences for this showing and telling. For another twenty five per cent of the class, newstime was characterised as a time of receiving - listening and learning about another child's experience or special item. It is interesting to note Lorelei's response to these drawings and comments about newstime because, for her, they highlighted the differences between her own intentions for newstime and how the children perceived them.

The teacher's perspective

> Lorelei's metaphors for newstime were not related to the "showing" and "telling" that the children's drawings and statements had intimated. Rather the essence of newstime for Lorelei was the process of building up a community within the classroom and the sharing of experiences through talking together. She talked

about "communication" a great deal in her first interview[3] and suggested it was important to open these communication channels from the very first day of school. She stated that it was important to allow the children to bring along something special initially as a "security blanket" to give them a basis for something to talk about. As the research phase progressed Lorelei's own reflection about newstime and how it could be organised evolved further.Over the two terms, Lorelei gave more attention to the organisation of the newstime activity, making changes to the newstime routine and continuing to question what was happening during newstime. During the second interview[4] she said that this had been due to the research process itself: it had led her to think more explicitly about newstime. She commented that *it's all developed because I've become more aware.* In the second interview with Lorelei in November, 1992, her image of newstime was very much one of communication:

The children come with the idea that I can communicate with them...start the language going two-way, (Harper tape 7, side A November, 1992)

The teacher's perspective can also be contrasted with that of a small parent group who agreed to share their thoughts on newstime in KY.

Parents' perspectives about newstime

Only six parents were interviewed, three in a small group discussion which was taped and three individually. The parents' perception of newstime was certainly overlaid with the importance of "presentation", even perhaps performance of a happening or something special to the whole class. Their concern was very much that their own children needed to develop confidence to do this in the classroom and sustain this ability throughout their life to be successful - a "life skill" perhaps?

The children's drawings and comments about newstime, both written and spoken seemed more similar to their parents' perceptions of the construct of newstime - i.e. presentation to a large group - than what Lorelei expressed as her purposes for the

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[3] Comments taken from interview with Lorelei, 8.5.92.

[4] Second interview with Lorelei, November 1992.

activity. At the same time it must be said that the children had different reasons to those given by the parents. For the children newstime provided an opportunity to be listened to and valued by everyone else in the class. For the parents it was important that their children developed the confidence to speak in front of a large group as a precursor to public speaking.

It would seem that the children already arrive at school with a construct of what newstime is and that this construct has been influenced by their parents perception and even their own past memories of their newstime experiences. This preconception may help shape what students take from the activity, regardless of the teacher's purposes. Some of the children did however raise the importance of listening to each other share and this was more aligned to the teacher's concept of community. Listening was not mentioned by the parents in their conversations about newstime but a number of children referred to listening to each other as part of the activity. While there is obviously some overlap between the metaphors of communicating, listening and oral presentation, the differences need to be further investigated. Teachers may need to be more explicit about their purposes and willing to share them with both their students and the parent community. The perspectives of students and parents have often been ignored in curriculum models. Students may need to be encouraged to share their constructions of learning tasks explicitly.

Conclusions

The findings from the three research phases suggested that intentions for newstime were not often realised through the structuring and organisation of the activity as it was described or observed. Where teachers were keen to impose very tight classification and framing boundaries it would seem less possible for the children to tell stories or discuss issues in an interactive manner . As Bourdieu (1990) has written: *in the case of ritual practices: if you take logical control too far, you see contradictions springing up at every step (p.70).* Newstime practices seem characterised by contradictions.

The researcher has attempted to integrate both a careful study of observed practice on

a small scale with patterns obtained from a larger sample of teachers about their newstime practices. Initial case studies led to examination of more general teacher practice which in turn led to ethnography. The whole research process was "constantly shaped and reshaped" (Burgess,1984, p.9), evolving during the investigation as the researcher tried to take up the challenge to subject a curriculum event often "taken-for-granted" to critical scrutiny (Delamont, 1992, p.197). Each research phase grew out of and built upon the preceding phase(s).

Another challenge to conventional notions about validity has been demonstrated through the use of triangulation (Mathison, 1988, Miles and Huberman, 1994). It is often suggested that *if different methods of assessment or investigation produce the same results then the data are likely to be valid,* (Burns, 1994,p.240). The triangulation of a number of different data gathering methods in this study has not lead to convergence (Mathison, 1988) about the newstime phenomenon. Rather they have highlighted some contradictory, inconsistent perspectives of newstime proposed by some of the key participants in the process. This does not mean the findings are any less valid. Rather, there are alternative constructions of the same phenomenon which need further exploration.

The conventional model of teacher-pupil interaction as embodied in the I-R-E/F (Sinclair and Coulthard,1976) sequence has been critiqued for the past twenty years (see, for example, Perrott, 1988) without much evidence of change in practice. Even in a part of the program when teachers intend that children be given opportunities to talk, the language being generated in newstime exchanges in a number of classrooms in the 1990's are, according to the findings of this study, no different in real terms to that being generated for many decades. They remain heavily dominated by the teacher. If some of the newstime transcripts in the case study and ethnographic phases are truly representative of the newstime interaction in those classrooms then the language codes in use may in fact be more restricted than the restricted codes postulated by Bernstein (1971). So much is tacit or assumed knowledge, so much is being taken for granted. The language use in many newstime situations remains ancillary restricting the use of imaginative language to explore the unknown. Newstime experiences in many NSW K-2 classrooms may not provide opportunities for children to think " the unthinkable, the impossible"(Bernstein, 1986,p.209).

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